

a
leader-
training
WORKBOOK

the leader and

GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

Gordon L. Lippitt
and Edith Seashore



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EDUCATION -

GROUP WORK

**The Leader
and
GROUP EFFECTIVENESS**



THE LEADER AND GROUP



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Edith Seashore

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Illustrated by

Terry Townsend

ASSOCIATION PRESS

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THE LEADER AND GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

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a revised workbook edition of a
LOOKING INTO LEADERSHIP
monograph

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INTRODUCTION

This little volume is, in some ways, an important symbol of our way of life. It reflects our recognition that leadership insights and skills are needed at many levels by many people in many kinds of organizations throughout the nation.

A free democratic society depends on voluntary efforts rather than coercion to get its important jobs done, believing that neither creativity nor co-operation can long be commanded. The linking of different individuals' energies, experience, and skill to achieve a goal is a complex process, requiring much of both leaders and members. Group effort is often ineffective and frustrating—meetings drag on endlessly, issues get rehashed, decisions are delayed, committees “keep minutes and waste hours.”

Leaders and members who have grown impatient with such group efforts are beginning to find new “handles” to their frustrating problems. Behavioral scientists are building an impressive body of knowledge about what makes people “tick”—why we are motivated, why we resist, what helps us to be creative, and how we can combine our efforts most effectively in groups.

Recently, Leadership Resources, Inc. began to bring this growing body of knowledge about group and leadership behavior into sharper focus by publishing its *LOOKING INTO LEADERSHIP* monographs. Since their appearance, these illustrated monographs have been used extensively in the leadership and management develop-

ment programs of voluntary organizations, business firms, and government agencies.

To make these widely tested and approved materials even more generally available, Leadership Resources, Inc. (LRI) and Association Press have joined forces to create and publish this new series of leader-training workbooks. Each workbook includes one of LRI's monographs with some textual revisions, together with specially prepared self-examination questions. This new format is designed to help the reader "think along" with the author throughout the book—continually testing and applying the principles to groups he knows.

The Leader and Group Effectiveness presents some systematic ways of looking at groups and understanding their behavior. Authors Gordon L. Lippitt and Edith Seashore not only describe the characteristics of an effective group, but also suggest what individual members and leaders can do to improve a group's operation. Dr. Lippitt is Director of the Center for the Behavioral Sciences and Professor of Behavioral Science at George Washington University. Mrs. Seashore is an organizational consultant with wide training experience.

Association Press and LRI hope that this LEADER-TRAINING WORKBOOK will provide new insights and stimulation to those who seek to strengthen the leadership fiber of our nation—from committee and chapter to corporation and government agency.

WARREN H. SCHMIDT, PH.D.
Editor



how to read this WORKBOOK

... to get the most from this material about group effectiveness, relate yourself to these printed pages effectively—read this book in a new way.

Read only right-hand pages as you go through the book. First you may wish to read through all of the right-hand pages very quickly.

Then go back. Begin reading now as though the authors were talking directly and only to you.

This time, as you finish each right-hand page, *don't* turn to the next right-hand page. Stop. Deal with any material on the facing left-hand page before you go on to the next right-hand page.

Many left-hand pages can be worth a long stop. They'll try to involve you *in* what the author is saying... try to help you feel it, measure it, apply it, practice it. For a new "reading" experience, don't skip those left-hand pages.

THE PUBLISHER

As you read this Workbook, you might want to keep in mind groups in which you are a member or a leader.

Work Groups (List)

Civic Groups

Recreation Groups

Intimate Groups (Family, etc.)

How do these groups differ?

A LEADER OFTEN WANTS TO KNOW . . .

1. How can I get members to participate more fully in my group?
2. What makes an effective group?
3. How can I keep group discussion on the track?
4. What causes cliques to form—and how can they be handled?
5. Why do members so often have trouble understanding one another?
6. How can a group examine its own functioning?
7. When is *group* decision-making more practical than *individual* decision-making?

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 10



SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TELL US . . .

During the past fifteen years social scientists have devoted more and more research to group phenomena—the “how” and “why” of group behavior. And during this time, those who work in group settings have been trying new ways to apply these findings to practical situations in organizations and businesses.

In trying to discover what makes some groups effective and others ineffective, social psychologists have studied the forces which determine the behavior of the group and its members. These forces make up the “dynamics” of the group.

“Group dynamics” is *not* something that occurs or disappears according to the wish of the leader or the members. *Every* meeting and *every* group has its dynamics—its unique *pattern of forces*. These forces describe the interaction in the group—the interpersonal relationships, the communications problems, the way the members make decisions. Although these forces may exist in varying degrees, an examination of any group shows that they are always present.

Over the years considerable research has been conducted on the characteristics of groups, the dimensions



of their growth, the functions that constitute their leadership, their decision-making processes, and other factors which provide insights into their effectiveness. In fact, research tools and concepts now make it possible to analyze the dynamics of a group and to diagnose with considerable accuracy its behavior, the difficulties it will encounter, and some effective ways it can deal with its problems.

For example, there is now persuasive evidence to support the following principles about group behavior:

1. Successful group productivity depends on the ability of the members to exchange ideas freely and to feel involved in the decisions and the processes of the group.
2. A collection of capable individuals does *not* always produce a capable group. Mature adults often form an immature working group. When people get together, they assume a character and existence all their own, growing into a mature working group or becoming infantile in their handling of problems. A number of investigators are now studying this area of group pathology, identifying reasons why some groups fail to be creative and productive.
3. Groups may be helped to grow to maturity; they need not develop like Topsy. By using appropriate



procedures, groups can become more productive, channel energies into effective work, and eliminate or replace internal conflicts that block group progress.

4. The ability of a group to function properly is not necessarily dependent upon the leader. No group can become fully productive until its members are willing to assume responsibility for the way the group acts. Any group can benefit from a skilled leader, but to get creative group thinking, group decisions, and group action, research evidence indicates that many different roles are required. The effective leader must realize (and help the members to realize) that contributing to the total task of leadership is a responsibility of each member.

While many aspects of group life continue to provide material for research, studies have already produced an impressive array of principles for understanding and increasing group effectiveness.

SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES . . .



An Effective Group . . .

1. Has a clear understanding of its purposes and goals.
2. Is flexible in selecting its procedures as it works toward its goals.
3. Has achieved a high degree of communication and understanding among its members. Communication of personal feelings and attitudes, as well as ideas, occurs in a direct and open fashion because it is considered important to the work of the group.
4. Is able to initiate and carry on effective decision-making, carefully considering minority viewpoints, and securing the commitment of all members to important decisions.
5. Achieves an appropriate balance between *group productivity* and the satisfaction of *individual needs*.

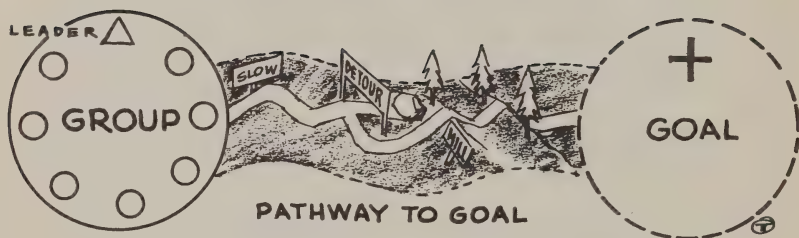
Choose the group you wish to analyze and rate them on these eleven points:

	Very High	So-So	Low
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			

6. Provides for sharing of leadership responsibilities by group members—so that all members are concerned about contributing ideas, elaborating and clarifying the ideas of others, giving opinions, testing the feasibility of potential decisions, and in other ways helping the group to work on its task and maintain itself as an effective working unit.
7. Has a high degree of cohesiveness (attractiveness for the members) but not to the point of stifling individual freedom.
8. Makes intelligent use of the differing abilities of its members.
9. Is not dominated by its leader or by any of its members.
10. Can be objective about reviewing its own processes. It can face its problems and adjust to needed modifications in its operation.
11. Maintains a balance between emotional and rational behavior, channeling emotionality into productive group effort.

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 20

A LOOK AT BASIC CONCEPTS ...



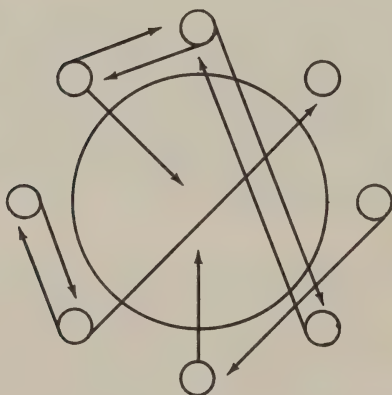
Most groups are working toward some goal. Even informal bull sessions have informal goals. A conceptual model of a working group might look like the drawing on the opposite page.

Our concern in this section is to look at the dynamics that are present as a group moves along the "path" toward its goal. Understanding these dynamics—these characteristic aspects of group life—will help us work more effectively in group settings.

Briefly, the behavior of any group can be analyzed in terms of its background, pattern of participation and communication, atmosphere and cohesion, subgroupings, standards, procedures, goals, leader and member behavior. The following is an elaboration of these basic concepts, along with questions which might be asked about any group.

1. Group Background. Every group has a history, consisting of both its previous experiences and the personal notions and attitudes which the members bring to the group. These bear directly upon the life of the group. The responses and feelings of the group which have been generated in the past are also present—traditions, norms, goals, procedures, and activities which the group has developed.

Draw a diagram showing the seating arrangement of the group, and draw arrows to indicate participation patterns (arrows showing comments to another person or to whole group):

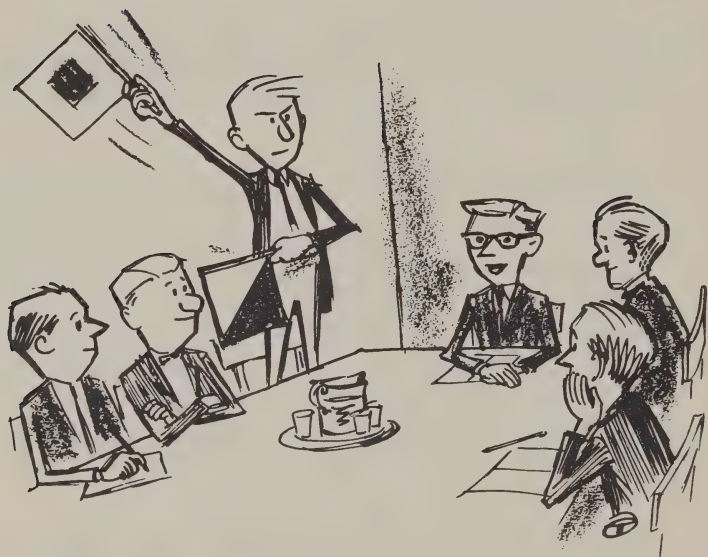


- What is the history of the group?
- How does this history affect the relationships of the members?
- How does this history affect the work of the group?

2. Group Participation. In every group situation people are interacting with one another in many different ways. Participation can be described in terms of who is speaking to whom, and how much speaking is being done and by whom. Participation patterns tell something about the status and the power in the group, and often indicate how effectively the group is using the resources of its members. Participation for participation's sake is not the goal, but rather participation appropriate to the task, the resources of the individual, and the readiness of the group.

- Does the participation bring out what the various members might be able to contribute?
- Are particular factors affecting the participation—status people, unusually talkative members, awareness of outside pressures, etc.?

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 24



3. Group Communication. This is primarily what people say, how they say it, and what effect it has. However, much significant communication is *non-verbal*—in posture, facial expression, gesture, etc.—and our response is frequently to this *non-verbal* level of communication. In verbal communication, the clarity of expression, the honesty with which real feelings are expressed, and the ability to listen to others have an important influence on group effectiveness.

- How much experience and feeling are members willing to share with each other?
- How clearly do members express their ideas?
- How many are really *listening*?
- Does everyone understand what is being said?
- What non-verbal means of communication are being employed?



4. Group Cohesion. This relates to the attractiveness of the group to its members. A variety of factors are involved in the cohesiveness of a group. For example, the ways in which members express likings for one another affect group cohesion. Fear of a common enemy or zeal for a common task can affect cohesiveness. Perhaps the most effective cohesiveness is that which enables members to work together in an *interdependent* way, where each member feels free to invest himself and to make his contribution toward the work of the group, while retaining his individuality.

- How well is the group working together, accepting and rejecting the contributions of individuals?
- How willing are the members to accept and act upon group decisions?
- Is the cohesiveness dependent on likes and dislikes of persons for each other, or is it based on a commitment to the common group goal?

How would you rate the climate of your group?

1. Rejects Ideas of Members Accepts Ideas of Members

2. Uses Formal Procedures Uses Informal Procedures

3. Inflexible Flexible

4. Tense Climate Relaxed Climate

5. Group Atmosphere. At any given time a group's atmosphere is somewhere between "defensive" and "accepting." In a *defensive* atmosphere members are unable to communicate freely, to disagree with other members, or to expose ideas and feelings which run counter to the direction in which the group is going. If the atmosphere is a controlling, punishing, rigid one, the group's behavior will tend to become conforming, dependent, or apathetic. But if the atmosphere is one of listening, understanding, trusting—in short, *accepting*—then the group will develop greater creativity, with more helping relations among the members.

- How free do members feel to express themselves and to share personal feelings?
- How well does the group give support to its individual members?
- How flexible is the group climate in adjusting to the needs of different tasks?

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 30



6. Subgroupings. Subgroups (sometimes called “cliques”) often develop in groups. Sometimes such subgroups form on the basis of friendships, sometimes because of a common need or interest at a particular stage of the group life, or sometimes because of antipathy toward other members or opposition to the direction of the group. Subgroups can change within the group in relation to new tasks, new forces, or new members, and they can greatly influence the group’s effectiveness.

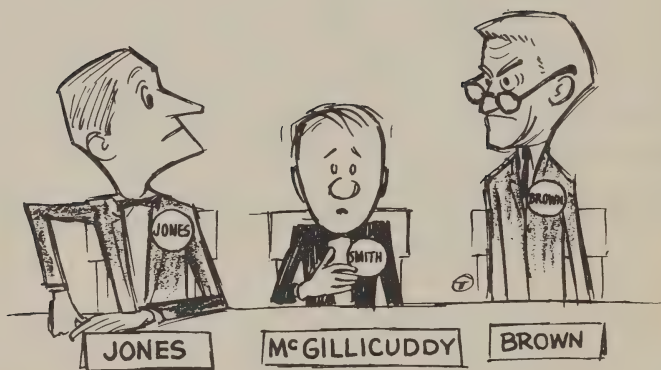
- What subgroups exist, and how do they work with the total group?
- What are the needs, issues, or forces around which subgroups appear to form?

What standards of behavior do you like to see develop in a group?

What do you do to encourage the development of these standards?

7. Group Standards. These refer to the code of operation adopted by a group. These standards provide a framework or guide for adjusting individual needs and resources to the actions of the group. They help to stabilize the group and contribute to its cohesiveness. Some examples of standards might be: whether members speak out spontaneously, wait to be called on, or wait for “their turn” to talk; whether they sit at the same place each meeting or change places, etc. Group standards can be either implicit or explicit, with most groups operating on certain implicit standards which are rarely stated openly.

- Has the group developed standards of behavior for its own operation?
- Are the standards that have been developed implicit or have they become explicit—and therefore open to re-examination?
- Does the group examine its standards so it can change those which need **changing** and keep those which are useful?



8. Group Procedures. All groups operate with a certain set of procedures—that is, defined ways of getting work done. If a group is to achieve maximum effectiveness, it must be able to vary its procedures so that they are appropriate to the task to be done. Some group procedures are: how an agenda is prepared and used; how votes are taken (by ballot or by hand); how discussion is controlled or guided, etc.

- What kind of procedures does the group use?
- How appropriate are the procedures for the size of the group?
- How appropriate are the procedures for accomplishing the group task?
- Are the procedures understood by all of the members of the group?

Look more closely at the goals of your group:

- ☐ How **clear** are the goals?
- ☐ Who **determines** the goals?
- ☐ How **flexible** are the goals?
- ☐ Are the goals **achievable**?
- ☐ Do the goals meet **individual needs**?

9. Group Goals. Goals can be immediate and short-range or long-range; they can vary in their clarity and in the value which the group places upon them; they can emerge from the group or be imposed on it; they can be realistic in relation to the resources of the group, or completely unrealistic. Effective groups must continually check the clarity and validity of their goals.

- How does the group choose its goals?
- Are the goals realistic and attainable, considering the resources of the group?
- Does the group relate its immediate task to long-range group objectives?

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 38



10. Group Leader and Member Behavior. Leader behavior in a group can range from almost complete control of the decision-making by the leader to almost complete control by the group, with the leader contributing his resources just like any other group member. A leader can assume most of the functions required to provide leadership for the group; or these functions can become the responsibility of the members as well.

- Are the necessary group leadership functions being distributed among the group's membership?
- Does the leader vary his behavior so that the members can assume appropriate responsibility for the decisions of the group?

One of the continuing problems one faces in attempting to increase the effectiveness and productivity of groups is that of becoming aware of the relation of the group's structure and dynamics to its task performance. Every group operates on three levels:

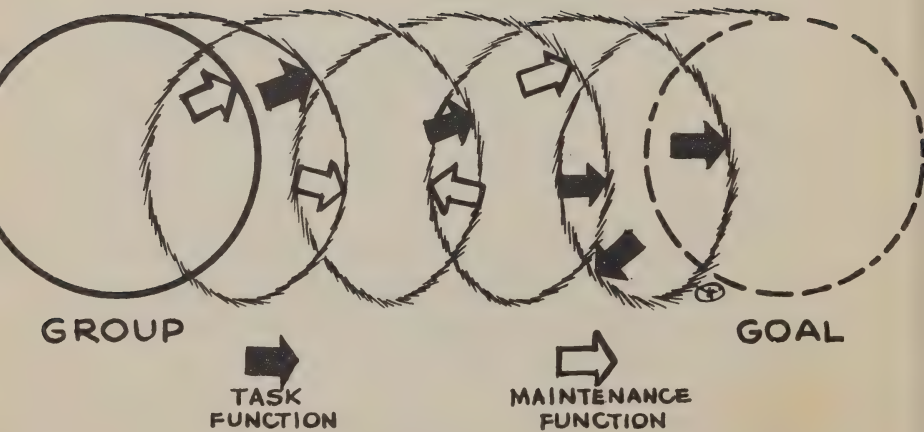
In your group experience what is usually done to achieve a balance among these three levels of needs?

1. *Group Task Level.* Most groups have some task confronting them, and exist primarily to carry out that task. Frequently they are so conscious of the need to accomplish this task that they are unaware of the other levels of need which are operating simultaneously—the group maintenance level and the individual needs level.

2. *Group Maintenance Level.* As people work together on a task in a group, they are also doing something *to* and *with* each other. Consequently, a group consists of a constantly changing network of interactions and relationships. A group needs to have a growing awareness of itself as a group, and to face the need of maintaining the relationships within it if the task is to be accomplished. The maintenance level refers to what is happening to persons as the task is being accomplished.

3. *Individual Needs Level.* Every individual member brings to a group a particular set of needs which impinge upon the group and its task. It is at this level that we are most apt to be found wanting, for individual needs are frequently well hidden behind the task drive of the group, or behind well-developed behavior patterns.

As a group operates to balance these three levels, it becomes a more effective, mature group. When one or more of these levels is neglected, the efficiency of the group is impaired and its growth thwarted.



Leadership Functions in a Group

For a group to operate effectively at all three levels, a number of leadership functions must be performed by both the designated leader and the members of the group. The performing of these functions permits the group to satisfy the needs of its members and to move toward its objectives. There are two main categories of leadership functions — those required to meet the needs at the *task* level, and those required to meet the group *maintenance* level needs.

You might like to use an observation sheet to examine your own group's performance of these functions at the next meeting.

(See Observation Sheets on pages 48 and 50.)

1. Task Functions. These leadership functions are to facilitate and co-ordinate group effort in the selection and definition of a common problem and in the solution of that problem.

- *Initiating.* Proposing tasks or goals; defining a group problem; suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving a problem.
- *Information or opinion seeking.* Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about a group concern; asking for suggestions or ideas.
- *Information or opinion giving.* Offering facts; providing relevant information about group concerns; stating a belief; giving suggestions or ideas.
- *Clarifying or elaborating.* Interpreting or reflecting ideas and suggestions; clearing up confusions; indicating alternatives and issues before the group; giving examples.
- *Summarizing.* Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.
- *Consensus testing.* Sending up “trial balloons” to see if the group is nearing a conclusion; checking with the group to see how much agreement has been reached.

OBSERVATION SHEET

TASK FUNCTIONS

Leader-Member Behavior Required for
accomplishing Group Tasks

	SELF	NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS	TOTALS
1. Initiating			
2. Information or opinion seeking			
3. Information or opinion giving			
4. Clarifying or elaborating			
5. Summarizing			
6. Consensus testing			

2. Maintenance Functions. Functions in this category describe leadership activity necessary to alter or maintain the way in which members of the group work together, developing loyalty to one another and to the group as a whole.

- *Encouraging.* Being friendly, warm, and responsive to others and to their contributions; showing regard for others by giving them an opportunity for recognition.
- *Expressing group feelings.* Sensing feelings, moods, and relationships within the group; sharing feelings with other members.
- *Harmonizing.* Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension by “pouring oil on troubled waters”; getting people to explore their differences.
- *Compromising.* When one’s own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offering to compromise one’s own position; admitting error; disciplining oneself to maintain group cohesion.

OBSERVATION SHEET

GROUP BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS

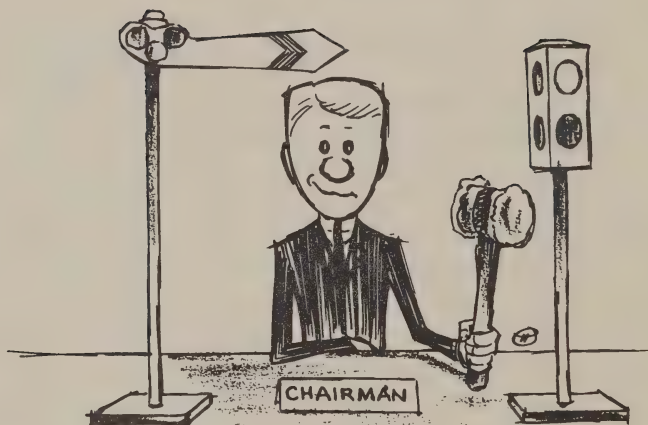
Leader-Member Behavior Required for Building and
Maintaining The Group as a Working Unit

	SELF	NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS	TOTALS
1. Encouraging			
2. Expressing group feelings			
3. Harmonizing			
4. Compromising			
5. Gate-keeping			
6. Setting standards			

- *Gate-keeping.* Attempting to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures for sharing the discussion of group problems.
- *Setting standards.* Expressing standards for the group to achieve; applying standards in evaluating group functioning and production.

Groups are likely to operate at maximum efficiency when members perform *both* task and maintenance functions and when these functions become the responsibility of *all* of the members, rather than of the designated leader alone. These two types of functions are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Very often in performing a task function, the member is also answering a necessary maintenance need (for instance, in summarizing related items one may also express the feelings of group members). It doesn't generally make any difference in a mature working group *who* renders a particular function as long as all the appropriate functions are performed. Of course in certain group settings the official position of a member or the particular personality of a member will influence the functions which that member performs.

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 50



What Shall We Do?

As a group works, a number of characteristics indicate its maturity. Among the most important are these:

- Ability to integrate group and individual goals

- Different members performing appropriate leadership functions as needed

- Balance of communication between content and feeling—and freedom to communicate both

- Tolerance for a wide range of individual behavior

- Adequate cohesion for efficient functioning

What do you like **best** about the groups to which you belong?

What do you like **least** about the groups to which you belong?

In light of your reading this Workbook, how do you feel you might strengthen these valuable aspects of group life through your own group membership?



Appropriate decision-making procedures—with minority viewpoints being considered — and a growing awareness of consensus



Flexible group procedures adapted to accomplish the task



Ways of examining group operation, with members giving and receiving frank reactions to individual behavior



Appropriate use of the resources available to the group

◀..... NOW READ PAGE 54

A possible evaluation form for your group to use:

Meeting Evaluation Form

1. How did you feel about this meeting? (Check)

No good_____Mediocre_____All right_____

Good_____Excellent_____

Comment: _____

2. What were the strong points?
3. What were the weaknesses?
4. What improvements would you suggest for future meetings?

A LEADER MIGHT ASK HIMSELF . . .



How can I give greater responsibility for the effective functioning of the group to the members?



How can I find out from the members ways of changing my behavior to make the group more effective?



How can the group begin to look at itself critically so that it can become aware of those areas in which it is operating immaturely?

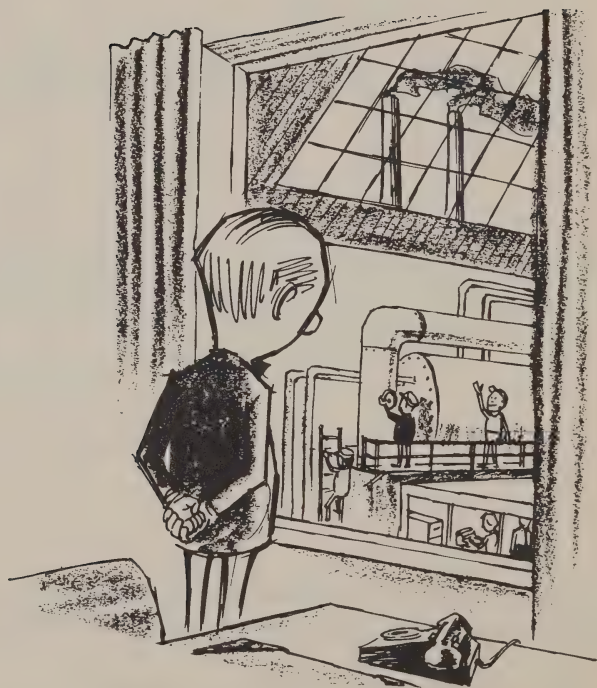


How can the atmosphere of the group become as accepting as possible?



How can we take assessments of the life of the group to see if it is growing along all dimensions?

LOOKING FURTHER . . .



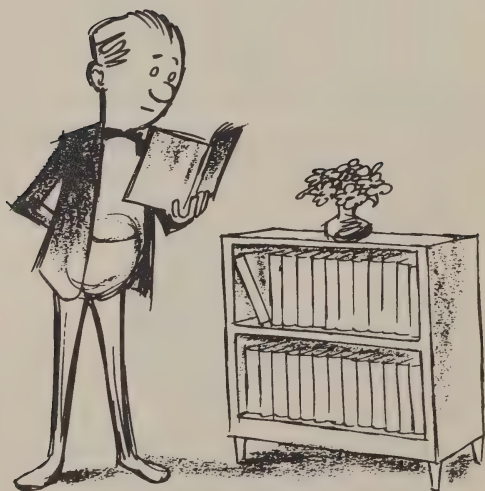
A leader, to improve his group relation skills, might think of the following resources to aid in his growth and development :

- **Participate in a Human Relations Training Program.**

A number of valuable two- and three-week training programs in Human Relations exist for the busy leader. Some of the most famous are conducted by the National Training Laboratories of the National Education Association. In addition, many universities have such programs, e.g., Boston University, Columbia University, George Washington University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Temple University, University of California, University of Michigan, University of Texas, and the University of Utah.

- **Use a Trained Consultant.**

A leader may be interested in the wise selection of a resource person to help in self-improvement or organizational situations which require analysis and consultant guidance. Many excellent resource consultants are available.



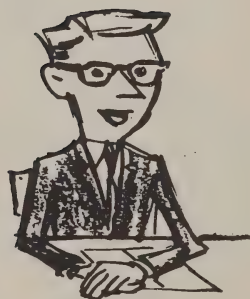
- **Attend Courses in Adult Education Offered by Public Schools and Universities.**

An increasing number of universities and public school systems offer courses, classes, and seminars in the field of group leadership. Call the local Director of Adult Education in your public school. Another source of advice is the Extension Division of the nearest university or college. Departments of Psychology, Sociology, Business Administration, and Education are among those offering courses in the field of group dynamics, group leadership, and similar areas.

- **Read some of the Selected Materials Now Available In the Field.**

Easy reading, and very helpful: *Introduction to Group Dynamics*, by Malcolm and Hulda Knowles, published by Association Press, 1956.


Practical applications of group relations: *Roads to Agreement*, by Stuart Chase, published by Harper and Brothers, 1951; *Dynamics of Participative Groups*, by Jack Gibb, Grace Platts, and Lorraine Miller, published by John S. Swift Co., 1951.



Some theoretical and basic books in the field with technical reading involved: *Group Dynamics Research and Theory*, by Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, published by Row, Peterson & Co., 1953; *Small groups: Studies in Social Introduction*, by Paul Hare, Edgar Borgatta, and Robert Bayles, published by Alfred A. Kraft, Inc., 1955; *Dynamics of Groups at Work*, by Herbert A. Thelen, published by the University of Chicago Press, 1954.

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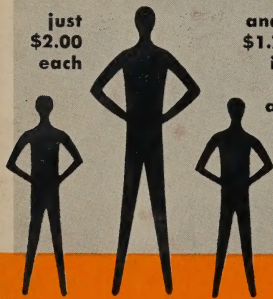
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Thomas R. Bennett II, gives you the skills for making necessary changes without conflict. Following a look at what social science and experience tell about the problems apt to arise, he shows how to avoid resistance by accurate anticipation and understanding of the effects of the particular change you want to make.

The Leader and INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION

Paul C. Buchanan leads you to constructive understanding of yourself and others through modern knowledge of what influences human behavior. Combined with his useful guidelines, this knowledge and its application gain for you more rational, flexible, creative and cooperative response from each person in your organization.

The Leader and GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

Gordon L. Lippitt and *Edith Seashore* bring you the best from group dynamics . . . how to discover the special characteristics of your group, how to apply this knowledge toward more effective participation, communication, and group productivity. Your special responsibilities as leader are clearly brought out.

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